

NORTHERN ONTARIO Business

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Sioux Lookout takes its mining message to PDAC

By: Northern Ontario Business staff



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The northwestern Ontario municipality wants to promote the region's gold, nickel, copper and iron ore potential under the marketing banner of the Trinity Mineral Exploration District.

The name refers to the three mining companies the town is closely affiliated with, specifically Noront Resources, Tamaka Gold and Rockex Mining.

Vicki Blanchard, the town's economic development manager, believes the get-together will attract more than 100 attendees to the Quebec Room at the Fairmont Royal York hotel on March 6, just prior to the kickoff of the annual mining show at the nearby Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Blanchard said it's an opportunity for all the parties working on various projects in the region to come together for a meet-and-greet.

"We've got so much going on in the mining industry in Northern Ontario and there's so much to talk about. How else do you know who's who and what's what?"

Blanchard said invitations for the two-hour event have been sent out to various people who are considered influential decision makers, site selectors, and foreign direct investors.

"I'm excited about this opportunity."

With Noront, Sioux Lookout views itself as the jumping-off point for the company's proposed west-to-east road corridor to access its chromite and nickel deposits in the Ring of Fire.

Tamaka is advancing a gold deposit southwest of town, while Rockex is forging ahead with a \$3.8-billion open-pit iron ore mine to the northeast which has the potential to reinvigorate the local economy.

The addition of a hot briquetted iron processing plant that Rockex wants to situate close to town would provide a business incentive to finally justify the construction of a natural gas pipeline to the community, 70 kilometres off the Trans-Canada Highway.

“We cannot compete in the North especially when we are the service centre for 31 other Far North communities,” Blanchard said of having a natural gas connection as an investment attraction tool. “We need to do something about it.”

The PDAC event also poses an opportunity for Sioux Lookout to showcase its holistic approach to economic development through its multiple partnerships.

Watay Power, a First Nations energy company, is poised to start construction of a transmission line from Sioux Lookout to Dinorwic, on the way to connecting more than two dozen First Nation communities to grid power for the first time.

At the town’s airport, funding is being arranged to start building a food distribution terminal under the umbrella of a non-profit logistics network designed to deliver fresh and affordable food to dozens of Northern reserves.

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